

what he is doing in this area. It is extremely important to the world.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank my colleague.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill includes \$15,004,000 for a U.S. contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD. Congress has been a strong supporter for IFAD since its inception, and these funds will enable IFAD to continue to expand its programs in the poorest countries.

Unfortunately, the Appropriations Committee report accompanying the bill neglected to address a concern which I suspect is shared by Senators on both sides of the aisle who support IFAD. IFAD is the seventh largest multilateral contributor to the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, HIPC DI. However, IFAD still does not have access to the core resources of the companion HIPC DI Trust Fund. Currently, IFAD has to absorb 87.2 percent of the cost for participating in HIPC DI, while other multilateral development banks with full access absorb much smaller percentages. For this reason, I urge the administration to work with other donors to enable IFAD to gain access to the core resources of the HIPC Trust Fund.

RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS IN
RUSSIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, page 45 of the committee report accompanying the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill, Senate Report 108-106, discusses rule of law and human rights programs in Russia. The report mentions the Russian American Judicial Partnership and the Russian American Rule of Law Consortium. The report failed to mention another important program, the American Bar Association's Central and East European Law Initiative, CEELI, which is involved in training Russian lawyers in the adversary system, law school curriculum development, and improvement of gender equity in the legal system. Each of these organizations is doing important work, and we want to be sure that despite the decline in our assistance program in Russia that funding for these types of programs are continued. There is no more effective way for the United States to contribute to the political and economic development of Russia than by strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, page 16 of the committee report accompanying the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill, Senate Report 108-106, discusses the Collaborative Research Support Programs. These programs, which involve 52 U.S. universities, have made immeasurable contributions in developing countries on a wide range of agriculture, environment, nutrition and development issues. USAID funds are leveraged with contributions from the universities and recipient countries.

For fiscal year 2003, the committee recommended funding for the CRSPs at a higher level than in fiscal year 2002. However, despite that recommendation, funding was essentially flat lined. For fiscal year 2004, the committee expresses its strong support for the CRSPs and recommends continued funding. I want to emphasize the importance of the CRSPs to the Congress, to the universities that participate, to the countries that benefit, and to U.S. foreign policy. We want USAID to expand its collaboration with U.S. universities that have research expertise on these issues. By that I mean that funding for the CRSPs should be increasing. An appropriate level for the CRSPs in fiscal year 2004 would be \$25 million. I also urge USAID to seriously consider allocating up to \$2 million to fund and establish a CRSP focused on water security.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to clarify a sentence in the committee report, Report 108-106, accompanying S. 1426, the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill.

On page 38 of the report, under the heading "Middle East Partnership Initiative," the committee expresses support for using a portion of MEPI funds "for scholarships for needy Muslim students at the American University of Beirut." We do support that, but we intended to also mention the American University in Cairo and the Lebanese American University. Their omission was purely an oversight. I ask my friend from Kentucky, the subcommittee chairman, Senator McCONNELL, if he agrees with me about this.

Mr. McCONNELL. I do. My friend from Vermont is correct that this was an oversight. We intended to express support for the use of MEPI funds for scholarships for Muslim students at the other American universities in the Middle East, as well as at the American University of Beirut.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ WAR

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this morning's Washington Post has a

front-page story entitled "Inquiry Faults Intelligence on Iraq." The sub-headline says, "The Threat From Saddam Hussein Was Overstated, Senate Committee Report Finds."

Many of us who voted against going to war against Iraq believed it was not in the national security interest of the United States to attack Iraq at this moment; that instead we ought to keep our eye on the ball and keep the pressure on al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden because it was al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden who attacked America on September 11, not Iraq.

I think this morning's report has increasing evidence that it was simply a misplaced priority to attack Iraq rather than keeping our full resources directed at taking down al-Qaida and holding Osama bin Laden accountable for his vicious attack on this country.

If we look across the evidence, I believe in many ways the United States simply made a mistake of judgment on what was most important. The President and his advisers believed—and I believe they sincerely believed—that the priority was to go after Iraq. They believed there was some link between Iraq and al-Qaida.

I think the evidence was always very thin for that and, in fact, the more we know, the more clear it is there really were not any strong linkages between Iraq and al-Qaida. In fact, it is unlikely that there would be because Saddam Hussein was secular, Osama bin Laden is a fundamentalist. In many ways, they are enemies; they are at odds.

It is very interesting that if one goes out and tries to ascertain what people of the country think, the polling shows 70 percent of Americans believe Saddam Hussein was behind September 11. Over half believe that Iraqis were the hijackers of the planes.

The fact is, not a single Iraqi was among the hijackers of the airliners that were turned into flying bombs. The vast majority of the 19 hijackers were Saudi Arabians, as, of course, is Osama bin Laden. I think 15 of the 19 were Saudis. Two were from the United Arab Emirates and there were other countries involved as well, but not a single Iraqi. That is the fact.

Another thing, we have now the President himself saying there is no evidence of a Hussein tie to September 11. It is very important we get the facts right when we make these judgments about going to war, especially when we are going to go on a preemptive war, when we attack first, something we have never done in the entire history of the United States. We have never attacked, without somebody attacking us first or attacking our allies first, but in this case we attacked first. As the Intelligence Committee report this morning suggests, we did so based on faulty intelligence and faulty evidence.

Another assertion that was made repeatedly was that there was a terrorist camp in Iraq that members of al-Qaida went to, but we knew then and we know now that that camp is in this